

# Daniel DeMelo

**1-The next Portland City Council will be unlike any that we've ever experienced in the past. How should Council operate and what will Council need to accomplish in the next two years to make the new form of government as effective and respected as it can be?**

The next Portland City Council must prioritize the issues our constituents deem most critical: homelessness, housing affordability, public safety, and economic vibrancy. Focusing on evidence-based solutions, particularly for homelessness, will be paramount. By leveraging data and proven strategies, Council can address these pressing concerns effectively and efficiently.

To ensure the success and respect of the new government, Council needs to be both collaborative and innovative. Engaging in open dialogue and exploring diverse solutions will be key. We must remain laser-focused on delivering tangible results, continuously evaluating our interventions to ensure they meet our goals and improve the lives of Portland residents.

**2-Current City Council members have suggested that we need to relax environmental and natural resource regulations in order to address the housing crisis. What is your perspective on this issue? What is your top natural resource and environmental priority?**

Relaxing environmental and natural resource regulations is not the optimal solution for addressing the housing crisis. Housing providers have identified more pressing issues such as permitting speed, permitting costs, development fees, and zoned density. These factors have a more significant impact on housing development than environmental protections.

My top environmental priority is housing because it directly affects carbon emissions. Apartment dwellers and those living in urban cores emit significantly less carbon than those in single-family homes or suburban areas. Therefore, addressing housing affordability and availability is crucial for reducing overall carbon emissions and promoting sustainable living.

**3-Vehicles are Portland's largest source of emissions and continue to climb. For example, a number of cities have restricted downtown vehicle use. How should Council address this issue?**

To address Portland's growing vehicle emissions, the City Council should prioritize support for public transportation and cycling. Safety is the primary barrier for potential cyclists and transit users, so our focus must be on creating safe and secure environments for these modes of transport.

I advocate for expanding pedestrian-only streets both downtown and throughout the central city. Our existing pedestrian-only streets are among the most vibrant areas, and increasing their number will encourage more people to opt for walking, cycling, and public transit, thereby reducing vehicle emissions and enhancing urban livability.

**4-There are a number of new and recently built market rate apartment buildings listed for sale for under \$250,000 per unit. The Portland Housing Bureau is financing a number of affordable housing projects that are costing more than \$500,000 per unit. There are some extra costs associated with affordable housing financing and with building more 2BR and 3BR units, but not nearly enough to explain the difference.**

**What specifically would you do to more effectively use our limited resources for affordable housing?**

Government programs need to be laser-focused on their core competency: delivering as much affordable housing as possible. While purchasing existing units can provide immediate relief, it doesn't address the underlying supply issue. We need to at least quadruple housing production to meet demand. Owning these units would allow us to increase the number of subsidized units available, but it is not a long-term solution to the supply problem.

To more effectively use our limited resources, I advocate for streamlining the affordable housing procurement process to maximize housing per dollar spent. This includes returning to low-cost bidding. But the government itself can only build so much – we need the private market to participate if we're going to quadruple housing production. That means reducing permitting times and eliminating unnecessary permitting costs & development charges. By making it easier to build housing, we can ensure that the private development market is robust enough to supply more middle-to-lower-income housing, ultimately addressing the broader issue of housing scarcity.

**5-Ireland used Citizen Assemblies to deal with difficult issues such as Abortion.**

**Please watch this two minute video and let us know if you think Citizen Assemblies could help Portland come together**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKSgPtnN0s0>

Yes, I think Citizen Assemblies would be a great initiative for Portland. Utilizing sortition or other methods of random selection for advisory committee memberships can ensure diverse and representative input. As the Chair of the Joint Office of Homeless Services Community Budget Advisory Committee, I have seen how traditional appointments can sometimes maintain the status quo.

Historically, Portland and Multnomah County used citizen-assembly-like grand juries to investigate infrastructure and services spending. Re-establishing such processes would foster community engagement and provide valuable insights into complex issues, helping to bring the city together.

**6-What is another City doing that Portland should replicate?**

New York City has had an established right to shelter since the 1970s, obligating the city to provide shelter for every homeless person. This policy has resulted in a 96% shelter rate, compared to Portland's 25%. This right has also driven a proactive response to the influx of migrants and asylum-seekers.

In New Jersey, the "Mount Laurel Doctrine" requires municipalities to allow a variety of low-to-middle-income housing and permits developers to use the courts to challenge cities that block such developments. Implementing a similar process in Portland would promote housing diversity and accessibility.